

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 EUR-08 INR-05
CIAE-00 DODE-00 SP-02 L-01 SAJ-01 TRSE-00 /050 W
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R 021825Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9418
INFO USMISSION NATO
USNMR SHAPE
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 03361

LIMDIS

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SHAPE FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: NATO, PFOR, PARM, FR
SUBJ: FRENCH ATTITUDES ON ARMS CONTROL DISCUSSIONS
IN NATO
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REFS: A. STATE 015870 DTG 250004Z JAN '77
B. USNATO 0302 DTG 191745Z JAN '77
C. STATE 003536 DTG 070305Z JAN '77
D. USNATO 6727 DTG 081446Z DEC '76

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: WE ARE NOT AT PRESENT OPTIMISTIC

THAT FRENCH ATTITUDE TOWARDS ARMS CONTROL DISCUSSIONS IN NATO WILL BECOME MORE POSITIVE. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE'S CONVERSATIONS WITH GISCARD WILL PERCOLATE THROUGH TO GOF WORKING LEVEL AND RESULT IN SOFTER FRENCH POSITION. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO RAISE SUBJECT WITH FRENCH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON TO REINFORCE OUR EFFORTS HERE AND THOSE OF USNATO IN BRUSSELS. END SUMMARY.

2. REF A REQUESTED EMBASSY VIEWS ON FRENCH ATTITUDES TOWARDS DANISH PROPOSALS ON NATO ARMS CONTROL EFFORTS (REF. B). REF. C REQUESTED OUR VIEWS ON HOW TO ENGAGE GOF ON CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL IN LIGHT OF NEGATIVE FRENCH POSITION ON NATO CONSULTATIONS REPORTED IN REF. D.

3. AT PRESENT, WE ARE NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT GOF WILL FAVOR EXPANDED NATO DISCUSSIONS ON ARMS CONTROL FOR FOLLOWING REASONS:

A. GOF MUST AVOID POTENTIALLY CRUCIAL POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS OF INCREASED UNEMPLOYMENT IN ARMS INDUSTRY AS IT FACES 1978 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. AS DOMESTIC MILITARY REQUIREMENTS ARE NOT SUFFICIENT TO SUSTAIN PRESENT LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT (LAY-OFFS ARE ALREADY BEING ANNOUNCED), THE EXPORT MARKET FOR ARMS BECOMES INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT. IN ADDITION, ARMS EXPORTS REPRESENT AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN THE FRENCH BALANCE OF PAYMENTS POSITION AND GIVE THE GOF AN ELEMENT OF POLITICAL INFLUENCE AND LEVERAGE IN PUR-

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CHASING COUNTRIES.

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B. A CONTINUING OBSTACLE IS THE TRADITIONAL FRENCH DESIRE TO LIMIT SCOPE OF NATO DISCUSSIONS TO SUBJECTS, WHICH THROUGH FRENCH SPECTACLES, ARE DIRECTLY RELATED TO ISSUES ARISING FROM THE TREATY.

4. THE FRENCH UNDERSTAND US DESIRES TO DISCUSS CONFIDENTIAL

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VENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL IN NATO AND, WE ASSUME, DANISH MOTIVATIONS IN PROPOSING EXPANDED ARMS CONTROL DISCUSSIONS. IN ADDITION TO THE FACTORS OUTLINED IN PARA 3, THE FRENCH ARE GENUINELY SKEPTICAL THAT ANY MEANINGFUL ACTIONS WILL RESULT FROM NATO DISCUSSIONS.

5. COUNTERBALANCING THE ABOVE PESSIMISTIC VIEW IS THE IMPACT OF VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE'S CONVERSATION ON ARMS CONTROL WITH PRESIDENT GISCARD ON JANUARY 29. IT MAY BE THAT AS A RESULT OF THAT CONVERSATION, THE GOF BUREAUCRACY WILL TAKE A MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE. WE WILL BE LOOKING FOR SIGNS OF THIS IN THE WEEKS AHEAD.

6. THE EXTENT TO WHICH FRENCH EAST-WEST POLICIES

WOULD IMPACT ON FUTURE FRENCH POSITIONS WOULD PROBABLY
DEPEND IN PART TO THE EXTENT THAT THE USSR CAN BE
DRAWN INTO EFFORTS TO CONTROL CONVENTIONAL ARMS
EXPORTS.

7. THE DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO RAISE THIS SUBJECT WITH
THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON TO REINFORCE OUR
APPROACHES HERE AND THOSE OF OUR COLLEAGUES AT USNATO.
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